

Standard 4-1 The student will demonstrate an understanding of the exploration of the New World.

4-1.1 Explain the political, economic, and technological factors that led to the exploration of the New World by Spain, Portugal, and England, including the competition between nation-states, the expansion of international trade, and the technological advances in shipbuilding and navigation. (E, G, H, P)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand / Conceptual Knowledge

Previous / Future Knowledge:

In 3rd grade, students explained the motives behind the exploration of South Carolina by the English, the Spanish, and the French, including the idea of “for king and country” (3-2.1).

In 7th grade, students will explain how technological and scientific advances, including navigational advances and the use of gunpowder, affected various parts of the world politically, socially, and economically and contributed to the power of European nations (7-1.2).

It is essential for students to know:

Economic factors motivated Europeans to explore the world. The expansion of international trade was both a cause and a result of the Age of Exploration. Merchants brought spices from the Far East to Europe to trade for a profit. Other Europeans wanted more goods from the East without the added expense charged by these middle men. Because of the leadership of Prince Henry and their geographic location on the Atlantic Ocean, **Portugal** was the first to seek a water route to Asia. Economic competition with Portugal influenced **Spain** to sponsor Columbus and others to explore the unmapped lands in the New World that were found by various explorers.

Political factors included **competition between nation-states**. **England** and other countries in Europe became interested in the New World, especially as the Spanish found gold and silver that made them the most powerful nation in Europe. The English monarchs began to send explorers to the New World and in the next few centuries they would become the dominant country in the settlement of North America.

The **technological** factors helped the explorers. Advancements in shipbuilding included the construction of the caravel, which was a smaller faster ship with triangular sails that could sail into the wind. Many improvements in **navigational** skills allowed sailors to venture further out to sea. The astrolabe, which measures the height of the sun above the horizon, the compass, and the reading of the celestial stars aided sailors in plotting their location and course. Cartography, map making skills, helped them to share their knowledge with others and was taught at the Portuguese School of Navigation.

It is not essential for students to know:

It is not essential for students to know the life history of the kings and queens of these countries and how they were related to each other. They do not need to understand about the introduction of gunpowder as a technological advancement in Europe. They do not need to know about the life history of a sailor on a voyage.

Assessment guidelines:

Appropriate assessments would require students to **explain** the economic motivation for exploration, the political competition between Portugal, Spain and England and the impact of technology on exploration.